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Approved For Release 2002/08/08 : CIA-RDP82-00457R010400350001-1

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SECURITY INFORMATION
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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INTELLOFAX 26

INFORMATION REPORT

REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

CD NO.

25X1A

COUNTRY Iran

DATE DISTR.

7 February 1952

SUBJECT The Tudeh Party

NO. OF PAGES

3

PLACE ACQUIRED

NO. OF ENCL.
(LISTED BELOW)

25X1A

DATE OF INFO.

SUPPLEMENT TO
REPORT NO. [REDACTED]

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BY CABLE

1. Estimate of Tudeh Strength

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a. Tehran and Vicinity. There is no additional evidence which would necessitate revision of the estimate which placed Tudeh membership in Tehran between 4,000 and 8,000. In fact, recent information would tend to confirm the estimate of 8,000 members. Depending upon the extent of Government fraud in counting the votes, some indication of the number of Tudeh-front group affiliates, fellow travellers, and sympathizers in this area may become known when the final returns are completed. In the meantime the estimate of 30,000 adherents and fellow travellers should remain unchanged.

b. Provinces. Little new concrete evidence concerning the Tudeh provincial strength has been received. From election developments to date the Party has made a surprisingly poor showing in Gorgan, Gilan, and Mazanderan. However, this fact does not reflect the paucity of Tudeh numbers so much as the strength of National Front tactics which have prevented the Tudeh from exercising its full strength. According to recent reports, the Tudeh and Tudeh-front numerical strength in Kurdistan (judging from pre-election activity) is greater than expected. There is also some indication that the National Front is concerned as to the Tudeh strength in Abadan, where Party strength may be shown in support of the pro-Tudeh candidate Ali Omid in the forthcoming election in this area.¹ Indicative of this is the possibility that Hoseyn Maliki may relinquish his Tehran seat in the Majlis (which is virtually assured) and run for office from Abadan.

2. Ability of the Iranian Government to Control the Tudeh Party²

a. Iranian security agencies are believed at present to be capable of resisting successfully any attempt by the Tudeh to seize the Government by illegal means or to cause large-scale internal disturbances. However, there has

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been some Tudeh penetration of the Army and Police, and possible future deterioration of morale caused by delinquent salary payments will undoubtedly tend to reduce the will and ability of the Army to resist Tudeh aggressiveness.

- b. The Mossadegh Government has exhibited exceptional and unexpected shrewdness and firmness in neutralizing the well-organized Tudeh election effort in Tehran and the provinces. As soon as the elections are completed, it is expected that the Mossadegh Government may be forced to take a strong stand against the Tudeh, in view of the fact that the latter will represent the most significant and best organized opposition.
- c. The maintenance of strength necessary for the Mossadegh Government to control the Tudeh depends upon whether or not:
 - 1) the Government continues to receive wide-scale popular support in the face of economic deterioration;
 - 2) the National Front openly splits into antagonistic factions without the unifying "gravitation pull" heretofore supplied by British opposition and by the forthcoming elections. (There is already a major split between Makki and Dr. Mozaffar Baghai, and a split between Makki and Kashani is developing.)

3. Tudeh Tactics

Based upon current indications, it is believed the Tudeh will increasingly concentrate upon attacking the American position and the Mossadegh Government in connection with Point IV, American Military Missions, and possible settlement of the oil question (even though the settlement is favorable to Iran). The Tudeh will also find other issues which will assist it in its attempt to exploit current Iranian nationalism at the expense of Western interests. Tudeh-front organized demonstrators will probably continue, lending their voice to this tactical line and attracting an increasing Party-front support.

4. Conclusions

- a. In view of the election trend to date, there appears to be no possibility that the Tudeh Party will gain a significant minority in the Majlis through which it can ultimately seize power by parliamentary means.
- b. Under current conditions, the Tudeh is not capable of staging a successful coup d'état against the Central Government without immediate overt intervention of the Soviet Union in its support, or without indirect Soviet support (such as arms, money, and so forth) on a scale which would be tantamount to overt intervention and could scarcely be concealed.
- c. The future capability of the Tudeh to stage a coup depends upon the extent and swiftness of Iranian economic deterioration and whether or not such deterioration causes the breakdown of public administration and security.
- d. Rather than attempt a coup, it would appear more logical for the Tudeh Party to attempt further to weaken Western influence and to oppose attempts by the Iranian Government to reach agreements with the West.
- e. The Tudeh may attempt to exploit splits and rivalries among leading National Frontists by causing defections (either clandestine or overt) to the Party. This danger would be increased if Mossadegh should relinquish the premiership by voluntary resignation or by death, thereby causing a scramble for power by leading National Frontists.

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f. The Government at present is capable of seriously injuring the Tudeh and significantly reducing its potential by taking strong action against it, such as the arrest of its hard core leaders. In fact, this is the only way by which Tudeh progress and growth can be stemmed quickly. Whether or not the Government will take such action is problematical and depends upon many factors, including the potency of Tudeh opposition to Mossadegh, the endurance of popular support and the strength of the Government, and the full comprehension by the Iranian Government of the strength of the Tudeh Party. It is believed that Mossadegh tends to overestimate the extent to which his popularity is, in itself, a deterrent to the Tudeh.

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1. [REDACTED] Comment. Ali Omid was arrested and sentenced to ten years' solitary confinement, following the attempt on the Shah's life in February 1949. He was released on bail in May 1951.

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2. [REDACTED]

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